

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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O 031700Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 6937

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR OAS CO CU

SUBJ: CUBAN SANCTIONS: LOPEZ SPEAKS OUT

REF: A. BOGOTA 6831; B. BOGOTA 6842; C. CARACAS 7399; D. BOGOTA
6936

1. IN A MAJOR ADDRESS DELIVERED THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 2 AT THE
"NATIONAL HOMAGE" BANQUET IN HIS HONOR, PRESIDENT EOECT LOPEZ
REFERRED TO THE CUBAN ISSUE IN ALMOST THE PRECISE TERMS HE
INDICATED TO US HE WOULD USE (REFTEL A). HE SAID THAT A) THE
HIJACKING AGREEMENT HAD CREATED EXPECTATIONS, AND THE QUESTION
WAS WHAT COMES NEXT; B) COLOMBIA WOULD NOT RPT NOT OPERATE
OUTSIDE OF THE FRAMEWORK OF THE OAS; C) COLOMBIA WOULD NOT RPT
NOT ADOPT A PASSIVE ATTITUDE IN THE OAS BUT WOULD SPONSOR,
ALONG WITH LIKE-MINDED MEMBER STATES, A MOVE TO ESTABLISH A
COMMITTEE TO STUDY WHETHER THE REASONS WHICH GAVE RISE TO THE
SANCTIONS CONTINUE TO EXIST. HE MENTIONED NO TIME FRAME, DATES
OR PROCEDURE IN THIS CONNECTION. A TRANSLATION OF THE FULL TEXT
OF WHAT HE SAID IS IN REFTEL D.

2. AS CAN BE SEEN FROM REFTEL D LOPEZ COUCHED HIS POINTS IN
LANGUAGE MEANT TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF TAKING INITIATIVES,
BEING ACTIVE, AND BEING INDEPENDENT OF THE US., ALL OF WHICH HE
SAID HE WOULD DO FOR DOMESTIC TACTICAL REASONS. THE ATMOSPHERICS,
HOWEVER, SHOULD BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT HE
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HAS SAID. HE HAS BASICALLY SAID LITTLE MORE THEN OTHERS HAVE

STATED, VIZ., THE CUBAN ISSUE SHOULD BE REVIEWED BY THE OAS AND THE NEED FOR SANCTIONS RESTUDIED, ALTHOUGH HE HAS EXPLICITLY CALLED FOR A OAS STUDY COMMISSION. AT THE SAME TIME HE HAS MET HIS DOMESTIC POLITICAL NEEDS BY PHRASING THE POINT IN A WAY WHICH GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF COLOMBIAN LEADERSHIP AND INDEPENDENCE, AND TO THAT EXTENT HAS TEMPORARILY DEFUSED PRESSURE ON HIM FOR IMMEDIATE UNILATERAL ACTION.

3. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE SITUATION IS PRESENTLY STABILIZED. THE DANGER OF UNILATERAL ACTIONS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN LAID TO REST AT LEAST FOR NOW. THE CONCEPT THAT CONSIDERATION OF THE CUBAN ISSUE SHOULD REMAIN IN OAS CHANNELS HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED AND ACCEPTED. LOPEZ HAS FINESSED FOR THE TIME BEING THE QUESTION OF IMMEDIATE CONVOCAION OF THE OAS BY BEING PURPOSEFULLY VAGUE, AND THEREBY RELIEVED PRESSURES FOR NOW. HE UNDERSTANDS THAT ANY IMMEDIATE OAS ACTION WOULD GIVE US PROBLEMS, AND TOLD US HE HAS NO DESIRE TO PRESS FOR IT (REF B), FOR THE MOMENT THEREFORE WE ARE ABOUT IN AS GOOD A POSITION AS WE COULD REALISTICALLY EXPECT.

4. WE WILL OF COURSE HAVE TO GIVE THOUGHT TO WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN NOW AND NOVEMBER. THE SITUATION CANNOT REMAIN PURELY STATIC AND I DOUBT ANYONE IN COLOMBIA OR VENEZUELA WILL FEEL ABLE SIMPLY TO PUT THE ISSUE ON THE SHELF. THERE MAY BE RISING FAMESTIC PRESSURES IN EITHER OR BOTH COUNTRIES FOR FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS OF "MOVEMENT"; WHILE ALL CONCERNED ARE EXPLICITLY OR IMPLICITLY PREPARED TO WAIT TO NOVEMBER ON THEIR UNDERSTANDING WE WILL NOT OPPOSE ACTION THEN, BOTH PEREZ AND LOPEZ MAY FEEL THE NEED FOR SOME ADDITIONAL PUBLICITY OR EMOTIONAL "EXCAPE VALVES" BETWEEN NOW AND THEN. IN THIS REGARD I SHARE AMBASSADOR MCCLINTOCK'S CONCERN OVER THE PRESS STORIES THAT HAVE COME OUT ABOUT AMBASSADOR MAILLARD'S VISIT. ANOTHER UPI STORY ALONG SIMILAR LINES APPEARED THIS MORNING IN BOGH EL ESPECTADOR AND EL TIEMPO. THE PATRONIZING THEME AND NUANCES THAT THESE STORIES CARRY TO THE EFFECT THAT THE US HAS BLOCKED EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE CUBAN PROBLEM CAN ONLY IRRITATE AND RISK REAL BACKLASH. THESE STORIES IN FACT ARE VERY PROBABLY THE REASON WHY LOPEZ REFERRED TO THE CHINA/UN ISSUE AND THEN WENT TO SUCH EXPLICIT PAINS IN HIS SPEECH TO NOTE COLOMBIAN (AND LATIN AMERICAN) INDEPENDENCE OF US IN FOREIGN POLICY.

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